

Dutchess County Agricultural Advisory Committee

February 28, 2018, 10:00 A.M.

Dutchess County Farm & Home Center, 2715 Route 44, Millbrook, NY

DRAFT - MINUTES

Present: Mark Adams, Harry Baldwin, Mark Condon, Isaac Coon, Jennifer Fimbel, Shelby Frangk, A. Gregg Pulver, Stephanie Radin, Matthew Sabellico, Brian Scoralick, Leon Vehaba, and Eoin Wrafter.

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Sabellico opened the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

The November 2, 2017 meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted by the committee.

Agriculture Navigator Updates

Jen handed out a listing of the tasks that she has been working on since November (attached), as well as an annual 2017 report with the year's objectives and accomplishments. Highlights include:

- Jen noted that she attended the district meeting of science teachers of the Wappingers Central School District to speak positively about a proposed Plant Science Curriculum, which would encourage high school students to become involved in agriculture. The hope is to incorporate more agricultural courses, as well as an FFA program. After the meeting, Jen was asked to address the WCSD Board on the positive nature of this type of programming; the proposal was passed unanimously and the teacher involved has already received a \$5,000 grant to begin the program.
 - Jen added that she and Eoin discussed methods to forward ag education for our Dutchess County youth. Jen, in her role as Ag Navigator, could convene with educators from the regional ag programs (i.e. Dutchess Community College, Poughkeepsie Farm Project, Green Teen, Dutchess County Boces, Pine Plains Central School District, Wappinger Central School District, Marist College, and Columbia Greene Community College) to outline pathways for students to follow when pursuing the various tracks of agriculture. Dr. Condon expressed enthusiasm for this type of interdepartmental cooperation, as DCC has already begun discussing the potential integration of programs with Marist College and the Culinary Institute of America. Brian noted that it may be beneficial to involve tech teachers from the various schools into the ag programs discussion.
 - Leon added that the Poughkeepsie Farm Project secured a DEC grant to do a Green Jobs training program, which will give Poughkeepsie youth the opportunity to interact with urban agriculture.
- Jen participated in an interview on Clear View Hudson Valley Live (5 iHeartRadio stations) regarding the Agricultural Navigator position; Jen said she would be happy to provide the link to anyone who would like it.
- Jen added that she is designing a program with Dutchess Tourism, Inc., Th!nk Dutchess Alliance for Business, and the Dutchess County Sheep and Wool Growers Association for a Chefs' Lamb Challenge. She applied for a \$5,000 mini grant from the American Lamb Board as seed money for the event.
- At the request of Legislature Chairman Pulver, Jen met with Mary Kay Vrba (Dutchess Tourism, Inc.) and Legislators Nick Page and Dierdre Houston concerning agri-tourism/agri-tech in the County.
- Jen is continuing to update the "Dutchess County Agriculture...It's a Growing Thing!" Facebook page. Currently, the page has 275 "likes"/followers. Jen added that the Farm and Ag report reaches 18,000-20,000 people daily.

Ag Inventory of Resources

Shelby noted that the Ag Inventory of Resources has been finalized. We are working on a database to compile all of this information, with the hope that a report can be automatically generated on an annual basis. The group agreed that once this document is searchable and on the website, it will be a great resource for local agricultural entities.

Audit of Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Codes

Eoin explained that the ag audit spreadsheet is a wealth of information, but in its current state, it is too overwhelming for general use. Communities will be able to access to the spreadsheet for individualized municipal purposes, but in order to determine countywide trends for future training sessions, the information will be more useful in a different format. We have been looking into ways to pare down this information and consolidate it into a digestible format for the public. Based on research of other communities and discussions with Samantha Levy from American Farmland Trust, we created five generalized topic areas, which encompass each question on the audit: Identify/Acknowledge Agriculture, Agricultural Statistics, Agricultural Impact, Agricultural Policies, and Barriers; the potential responses to each question are either “Yes,” “No,” or “Maybe.” These generalized topics were then summarized by the percentage of each response among the 30 municipalities. For example, 61% of Dutchess County communities acknowledge the positive impact of agriculture, but 64% of the communities have barriers within their zoning codes and/or comprehensive plans which make it harder for agriculture to operate effectively. Our next steps include a tech memo which will describe the barriers to agriculture identified by the audit, as well as training sessions (through the DC Planning Federation) which will demonstrate model ordinances/practices to be “farm friendly,” and the ways to implement them. Eoin requested that the group review the generalized topics and summary, and provide any feedback or concerns.

- Leon noted that the majority of communities’ codes do not include provisions for retail-based agricultural uses. Eoin noted that, often times, zoning codes and comprehensive plans do not keep pace with the changes in the agricultural industry; he noted that this is a not a problem that is unique to agriculture.
- The group agreed that communities could benefit from a better overall understanding of agriculture, agricultural practices, and State laws which supersede home rule (e.g. NYS Right to Farm Law, Agricultural Districts Law, etc.). The training sessions and Jen, in her role as Ag Navigator, will help to clarify some of these misunderstandings.
- Harry underlined the importance of the State-required Ag Data Statement and suggested developing a set of guidelines that would outline the types of development that could impact agriculture. Eoin stated that hopefully the training sessions and tech memo will provide clarity on this subject.
- Leon asked if any thought has been given to visually representing this data. Eoin is still thinking on this, but there may be an opportunity to use graphics to represent the individual barriers to agriculture identified on the audit. His intention is that part of the tech memo will include these kinds of graphics.
- In the training sessions, Jen underlined the importance of stressing positive examples of “farm friendliness” and highlighting model communities that have been successful promoting agriculture.

Open Discussion

The group discussed the upcoming annual Agricultural Advisory Committee forum, including potential topics and speakers. Ideas include: young farmers (Sarah Chase), local practitioners, restaurateurs/chefs (Peter Kelly), education, supply chain processes, farm-to-table, farm breweries (Plan Bee Farm Brewery), or overcoming barriers to agriculture. Eoin will send an email to the group requesting ideas for speakers and topic areas.

Shelby also mentioned that the Dutchess County Planning Federation released an article on the Agricultural Districts training session in October 2017; the article is available on the Dutchess County Planning department [website](#).

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be May 23rd at 10:00 a.m. in the Director’s Room at the Dutchess County Farm and Home Center.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Shelby Frangk, Planner

Dutchess County Planning and Development

October 2017

- Think Dutchess Business Alliance agricultural tour with National journalists – Arranged some of the tour sites and was on hand for questions. Have had 3 outreach back to me since the tour for more information on articles that they are writing.
- Attended the Hudson Valley Young Professionals Panel on agri-tourism at Crown Maple Farm.
- Attended Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney's press conference at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project on the Local FARMS Act.
- Attended the American Farmland Trust Conference *On Solid Ground* – about accessing farmland for farmers.
- Arranged the location for Congressman John Faso's Farm Bill listening tour held at McEnroe Farm and provided a suggested guest list. The Congressman is very interested in the issues surrounding slaughter infrastructures (or lack of).
- Attended the DC Planning Federation's program on Agricultural Districts with Bob Somers and Brian Scoralick as speakers.
- Calls from 2 assessors, after our program in September, with questions. The assessors both had attended the program. One referred the Code Enforcement Officer to contact me about an agricultural building permitting question.
- Working with Town of East Fishkill Supervisor on the former Global Foundries property and the possibility of a Food Hub or Food Distribution Center.
- Working with USDA FSA and DCSWCD staff on surprise inspections from the USDA FSIS (Food Safety Inspection Service) and citing the need for these farms to have a Food Defense Plan. They were also cited as distributors. No fines, but causing some issues.
- County Executive has proposed continued funding for the Ag Navigator program.
- Continue to update the Dutchess County Agriculture...It's A Growing Thing!SM Facebook Page. (<https://www.facebook.com/Dutchess-County-Agriculture-Its-A-Growing-Thing-157184667672497/>)
- Farm and Ag Report 5 days/week – approximately 3 hours/week prep time

November 2017

- Attended the DC BOCES Ag Advisory Board meeting. Curriculum was discussed and what local farms need with respect to potential employees.
- Additional discussion with Town of East Fishkill concerning the possibility of a food distribution center. Also spoke with several farmers to garner their thoughts on the possibility – all positive.

Jennifer Fimbel, Dutchess County Agricultural Navigator
October - December 2017 Report

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December 2017

- Attended a Climate Smart Communities webinar on *Agriculture & Climate Change Adaptation* that focused on how communities can take action to support farmers in their efforts to adapt to climate change and help maintain a viable and sustainable agriculture industry in New York.
- Edited some of the County's narrative and provided updates
- Secured our speaker for the Agriculture Breakfast, Ron Hicks.
- Finished edits for the *Inventory of Resources* for DC Planning
- Spoke with a company which plans on developing a project near Poughkeepsie which is currently assessed as agricultural land and the possibility of the imposition of a conversion penalty.
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Total Contacts October - December 2017: 56

- 32 Face to face
- 15 calls
- 9 emails
- unknown reach for radio, newspapers and newsletter
- Facebook Page has 264 Followers (not included in total contacts)

January 2018

- Attended the district meeting of science teachers of the Wappingers Central School District to speak positively about a proposed Plant Science Curriculum to encourage their high school students to become involved in agriculture. The hope is to incorporate more agricultural courses as well as an FFA program.
- As a result of the above, was asked to address the WCSD Board on the positive nature of this type of programming. The teacher involved has already received a \$5000 grant to begin the program. The proposal was passed unanimously.
- Continue to update the Dutchess County Agriculture...It's A Growing Thing!SM Facebook Page. (<https://www.facebook.com/Dutchess-County-Agriculture-Its-A-Growing-Thing-157184667672497/>)
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February 2018

- Designing a program with Dutchess Tourism, Inc., Th!nk Dutchess Alliance for Business and the Dutchess County Sheep and Wool Growers for a Chefs Lamb Challenge. Applied for a \$5000 mini grant as seed money for the event.
- Attended Assessors meeting highlighting solar.
- At the request of Legislature Chairman Pulver, met with Marky Kay Vrba (Dutchess Tourism, Inc.) and Legislators Nick Page and Dierdre Houston concerning agri-tourism in the County.
- Interviewed on Clear View Hudson Valley Live as Ag Navigator (5 iHeart radio stations)
- Continue to update the Dutchess County Agriculture...It's A Growing Thing!SM Facebook Page. (<https://www.facebook.com/Dutchess-County-Agriculture-Its-A-Growing-Thing-157184667672497/>)
- Farm and Ag Report 5 days/week – approximately 3 hours/week prep time

• Total Contacts January – February 2018: 67

- 48 Face to face
- 10 calls
- 9 emails
- unknown reach for media
- Facebook Page has 275 Followers (not included in total contacts)



February 2018

Agriculture



Objectives and Accomplishments

In the beginning of 2017, several objectives for the Ag Navigator program were outlined in the [2017 Dutchess County State of Agriculture Report](#). As listed below, much was accomplished in one year, but the work has just begun as we look into 2018.

Improving understanding between:

Local governments and farmers

7 Towns, 3 Villages; 80% of issues raised were resolved

Farmers and consumers/residents

Farm and Ag Report - 18,000 reached every weekday

Interview on Clear Channel radio - 25,000 reached

Dutchess County Agriculture...It's A Growing Thing!

Facebook Page - Growth of nearly 200%

Encouraging more farm friendly regulations within municipalities.

Work by Dutchess County Planning and Development on Farm

Friendly towns

Work with local Fire Commissioners on their role in

Special Districts

Efforts providing local Planning and Town Agricultural Committees with the tools to address the needs of our smallest farms.

Work done with 3 local communities on Comprehensive Plans (Agricultural portion) and definitions of agriculture and farming practices

Creating infrastructure development opportunities that benefit local farm needs and provide new jobs in the county.

Offering municipal official trainings.

60 Assessors Trained on NYS Law and agricultural properties

Investigating opportunities for new and young farmers.

Inventory of Resources completed and is soon to be released as a searchable database

Positioning ourselves to find sources of start-up capital for acquisition of farming Infrastructures.

Assisting school programs in offering basic agriculture in their curriculums.

In addition to the existing Pine Plains FFA and Agricultural curriculum; Green Teen Program and Poughkeepsie Farm Project;

Dutchess Community College

Columbia-Greene Community College

Dutchess County BOCES

Wappingers Central School District

Marist College and Sprout Creek

DUTCHESS COUNTY

2017 Ag Navigator Annual Report

Agriculture

In addition, the Ag Navigator web pages have been developed and will continue to be updated; nearly 700 people were personally reached; worked with Th!nk Dutchess Alliance for Business on a tour for 5 journalists to local farm enterprises which has resulted in 3 articles reflecting positively on the *Business* of agriculture.

These are not exhaustive steps, but more of an outline to continue to connect our communities with our farms for the betterment of Dutchess County. It is clear that more work needs to be accomplished in order for Dutchess County agriculture to continue to evolve and succeed.



DUTCHESS COUNTY AGRICULTURAL NAVIGATOR

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Dutchess County Agricultural Navigator

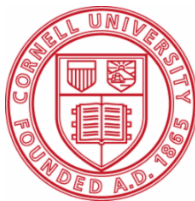
The Agricultural Navigator acts as a conduit for farmers, municipal officials and economic development specialists to provide impartial information and advice when implementation of local regulations are proposed that may have an impact on agriculture, farmland and agricultural businesses.

The role of the Dutchess County Agricultural Navigator is one of coordinating, collaborating and communicating with county and municipal officials, the farming community, agricultural organizations and other agencies on:

- Agricultural issues and solutions;
- Economic viability and sustainability of farming;
- Opportunities and feasibility of new infrastructures related to agriculture.

The Agricultural Navigator also assists in the implementation of the Dutchess County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan under the guidance of the Dutchess County Agricultural Advisory Committee.

The County of Dutchess awarded funding for the Agricultural Navigator initiative to Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Dutchess County

Th!nk
DUTCHESS
ALLIANCE FOR BUSINESS

Photo Credits:
Jennifer Fimbel, Ag Navigator